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## Who Is Served by Ky Slander?

A report from an unnamed and publicly unverified source which brands South Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky as an opium smuggler has been released by the Senate subcommittee on foreign aid expenditures. In the process, a heretofore unknown CIA operation has been exposed.

The Defense and State Departments have properly refused to comment on the unverified report because publication of the document by itself may seriously damage U.S.-South Vietnamese relations and perhaps damage the war effort against the Reds and prolong the conflict in Southeast Asia.

Vice President Ky may be a former opium smuggler. He may even have used CIA facilities to do so, if the operation cited ~~ever~~ did exist. It is doubtful that any highly placed Oriental could be found today who has not dabbled in some form of illegal trade at one time or another in his life. But it is not clear what the Senate subcommittee is seeking to accomplish by releasing the report.

Technically speaking, the sub-

committee members have used their official position with its attendant immunity from suit to slander and libel the second ranking member of the foreign state. Ignoring the common law rules on which this nation bases its judicial system, the subcommittee has accused a man but concealed the accuser.

Worse yet, the subcommittee has openly admitted to U.S. participation in a covert act against another nation, and bared the outline of an alleged subversive plot against the Ho Chi Minh regime. The report thus destroys the cover for similar operations and provides the Reds with one more thing about which they may be outraged to the point where they delay truce talks.

Release of the report constitutes an obvious attempt to influence U.S. foreign policy through the use of secret documents and to destroy the effectiveness of Ky as a leader. It is difficult to understand why the report was made.

If it was in retaliation for Ky's sharp remarks against this country, then it was a childish act that throws doubts on the maturity of the subcommittee members and their ability to deliberate on weighty matters. Vice President Ky is entitled to his own opinions and no one has insisted that he like this country, nor should anyone seek to muzzle him: such a tactic would be more in keeping with Red imperialism.

The destruction of the CIA operation is inexcusable, if such a project existed, and the use of unknown sources to smear a man is unthinkable. It should not be overlooked, when probing the probable causes for the release, that Sen. Ernest Gruening, D-Alaska, has not been a supporter of the administration's policies in Vietnam.